Othello®

A Minute to Learn...
A Lifetime to Master

GAME PAK INSTRUCTIONS

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for play on the

Nintendo
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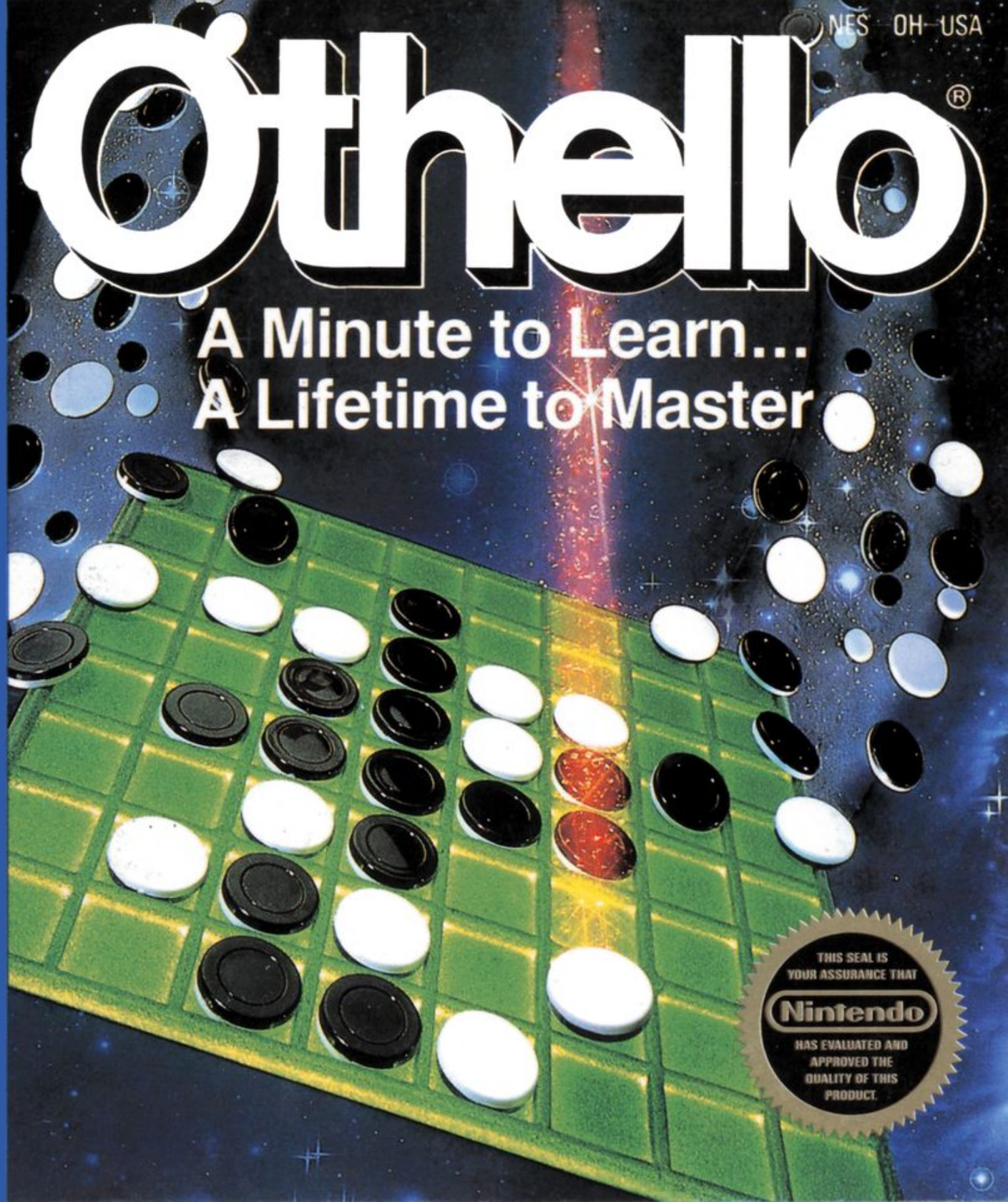
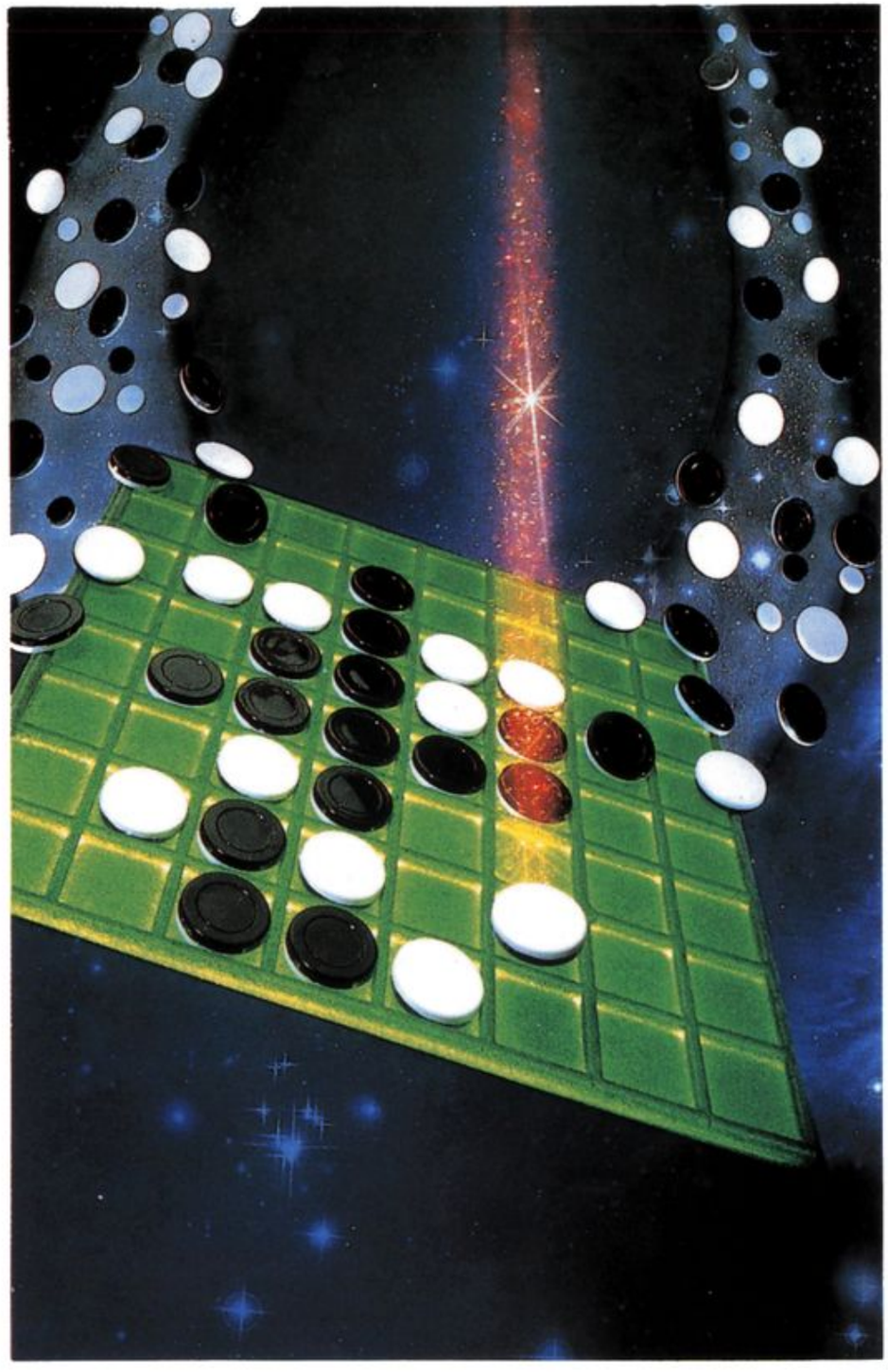

NES OH USA
Othello®
A Minute to Learn...
A Lifetime to Master
THIS SEAL IS YOUR ASSURANCE THAT
Nintendo
HAS EVALUATED AND APPROVED THE QUALITY OF THIS PRODUCT.

As easy-to-learn as checkers. As fascinating as chess. **Othello**® is a fast-paced game of wits and long-range strategy. And because one move can turn the whole board upside-down, you'll never know who's winning. Until they've won. That's why it may only take you a minute to learn. But it takes a lifetime to master.



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A MINUTE TO LEARN... A LIFETIME TO MASTER

The strong conquer the weak. The wise conquer the foolhardy. Black and White. Victory and defeat.

The concepts behind **Othello** are as old as time itself. Its origins are part Western, part Eastern. And today it is played the world over—with international tournaments to crown the World Champion.

Othello has been traced back to England in the late 1800s—when it was called *Reversi*. Then, 20 years ago, the Japanese refined the game and gave it the name **Othello** (after the famous Shakespearian play.) And it quickly became one of Japan's national pastimes.

It's easy to learn. Because the concept is so simple, so elegant. There are 64 squares on a square grid. And 64 discs that are white on one side, black on the other.

One player plays black and the other plays white. They lay down their discs, one by one—battling to control as much of the board as they can.

On each move, one player attempts to "trap" his opponent's discs between two of his own. And when he does, his opponent's discs are flipped to the color of the trapper's discs. So that BLACK forces WHITE to turn BLACK. And WHITE forces BLACK to turn WHITE.

This continual "flipping of discs"—with its changes of power—makes it difficult to predict the outcome of each game. One move could easily change the entire complexion of things.

And in knowing exactly *what* that right move might be lies the secret of **Othello.** A secret that could take a lifetime to discover.

So as you enter this age-old struggle—black and white, vulnerability and power—remember this: It's never over until it's over.

THE SET UP

Loading

1. Make sure the power switch is OFF.

2. Insert the **Othello** cartridge as described in your NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM® manual.

3. Turn the power switch ON.

You'll first see the **Othello** TITLE SCREEN. After a few seconds, the screen will switch to the **Othello** board—on which a complete demonstration game is being played. If you have never played

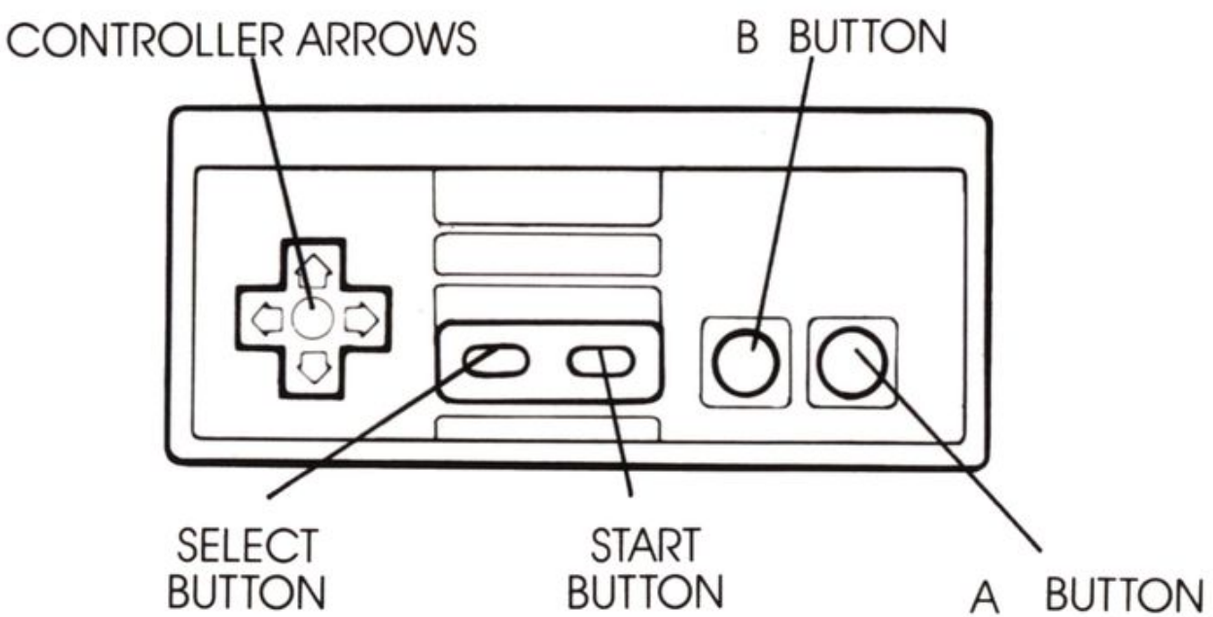
the game before, it may be helpful to watch the demo before you begin.

TO START—Press the START BUTTON

TO SKIP THE DEMONSTRATION—Press the START BUTTON while the TITLE SCREEN is in view.

THE CONTROLLER

The illustration below shows you your control points. Throughout this instruction book we will refer to these controls by the names indicated here.



SELECTING OPPONENTS

This NINTENDO® version of Othello gives you several game options. You can play against the Othello computer. Or you can play against a friend.

If you play against the computer, you have four difficulty levels to choose from. And in both 1-PLAYER (computer) and 2-PLAYER games, you can even choose the length of the game you wish to play.

The following sections of this guide will show you how to make these selections:

TO CHOOSE YOUR OPPONENT— Use the CONTROLLER ARROWS to move the flashing white arrow on the screen to the desired selection. Then press the START BUTTON.

These are your choices:

- You vs. the Othello computer (you're BLACK).
- You vs. the Othello computer (you're WHITE).
- You vs. a friend (2-PLAYER).

The first two choices above are 1-PLAYER games—the only difference being which color you wish to play. The third choice (above) is the 2-PLAYER option. Here are the differences:

1-PLAYER GAMES

In 1-PLAYER games—you against the Othello computer—you first choose between 4 difficulty levels. Then you can select your time limit. And in certain levels you will be allowed to CANCEL a move and make a new one. (See ***Selecting Skill Levels,*** page8).

2-PLAYER GAMES

In 2-PLAYER games —you against a friend—you don't choose skill levels, but you *do* choose time limits. You can CANCEL as many moves as you like—providing your opponent accepts your requests. (See ***To Cancel a Move,*** page 17).

SELECTING SKILL LEVELS

(for Othello computer opponents only)

TO SELECT SKILL LEVELS—Use the CONTROLLER ARROWS to move the white arrow on the screen to the desired selection. Then press the START BUTTON.

These are your choices:

- **LEVEL 1**—This is the easiest skill level. The Othello computer makes fast decisions. And you may change your mind and cancel your move as many times as you like per game. (See ***To Cancel a Move,*** page 17.)

- **LEVEL 2**—The computer thinks through its moves a little longer. You can only cancel moves up to three times per game.

- **LEVEL 3**—The computer plans ahead on each move—taking longer to make its decision. You

can cancel your move three times per game.

- **LEVEL 4**—No chances to cancel a move here. And you can only choose between either a 20- or 40-minute game. If you can outthink the Othello computer, you may have a chance at winning this level.

THE TIME LIMIT

In both 1-PLAYER and 2-PLAYER games, you can choose your time limits. Choose from 20-, 30- or 40-minute time limits. Or—for the ultimate test of strategy and skill—choose to play with no time limit at all.

The time limit you choose (20, 30, or 40 minutes) represents the total amount of time *each player* has to make all their moves.

For example, in a 20-minute game, you have up to 20 minutes—total—for all your decisions and moves. And your opponent also has 20 minutes. So if you both used up all your time, the entire game would then take 40 minutes.

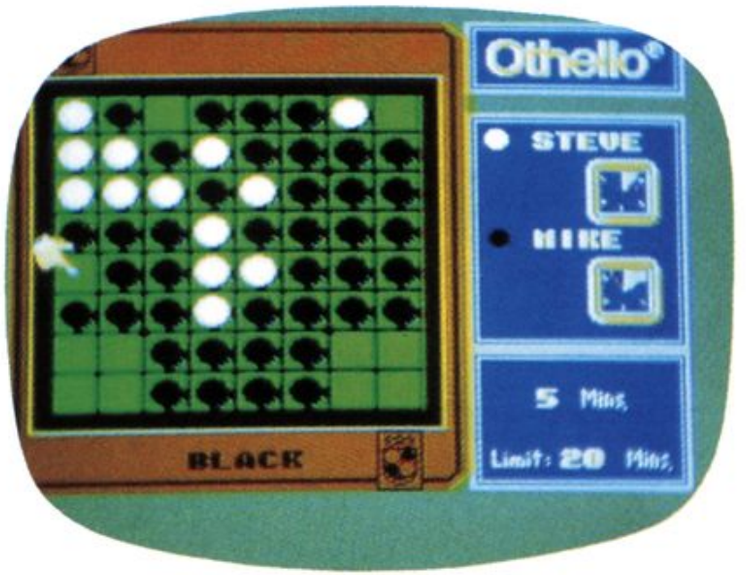
TO SELECT TIME LIMITS—Use the CONTROLLER ARROWS to move the white arrow on the screen to the desired selection. Then press the START BUTTON.

These are your choices:

- 20 MINUTES
- 30 MINUTES
- 40 MINUTES
- NO TIME LIMIT

TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR TIME—Watch the clock next to your name on the playing screen (See ***Entering Your Name,*** page 12). The red second hand will sweep the clock face once every minute. And the minute hand will mark off (in white) how much time each player has used up.

Your clock starts as soon as it is your turn and stops after you complete your move. If you have not made a move after one minute, the time you have used thus far in the game AND the time limit of the game will appear on the MESSAGE SCREEN. After you make your move, the information disappears.



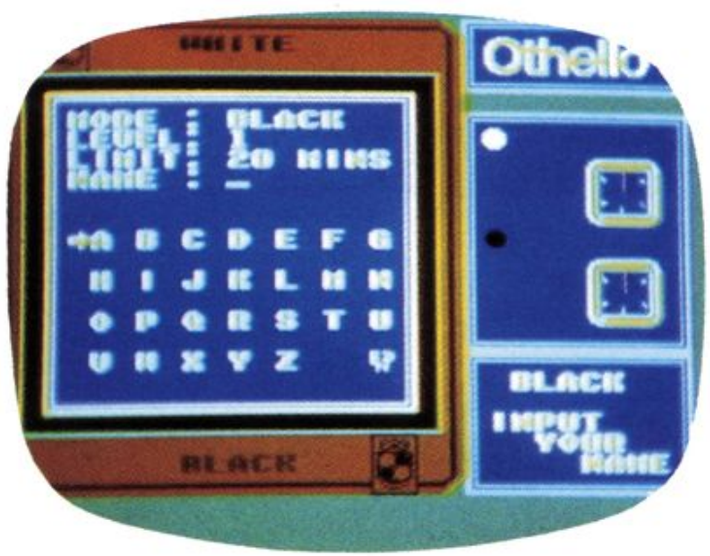
STEVE *(5:00)* **MIKE** *(10:00)*

In the example above, STEVE has used up 5 minutes MIKE has used up 10 minutes.

IF YOU RUN OUT OF TIME—Your opponent automatically wins—regardless of the disc count on the screen.

ENTERING YOUR NAME OR INITIALS:

Once you've selected the number of players, the skill levels and time limits, you'll be asked to enter your name or initials. Here's how:



TO ENTER YOUR NAME OR INITIALS—You may enter up to six letters of your name or initials. To do this:

- Use the CONTROLLER ARROWS to move the white arrow around the screen.
- When the white arrow is pointing to your desired letter or character, press the A BUTTON to select it.
- Continue this way until all your letters or characters have been selected.
- If you select all six letters, your entry will be complete when you press the A BUTTON to select your sixth letter.
- If you want to select *less* than six letters, just point the arrow to the word **END** in the bottom right

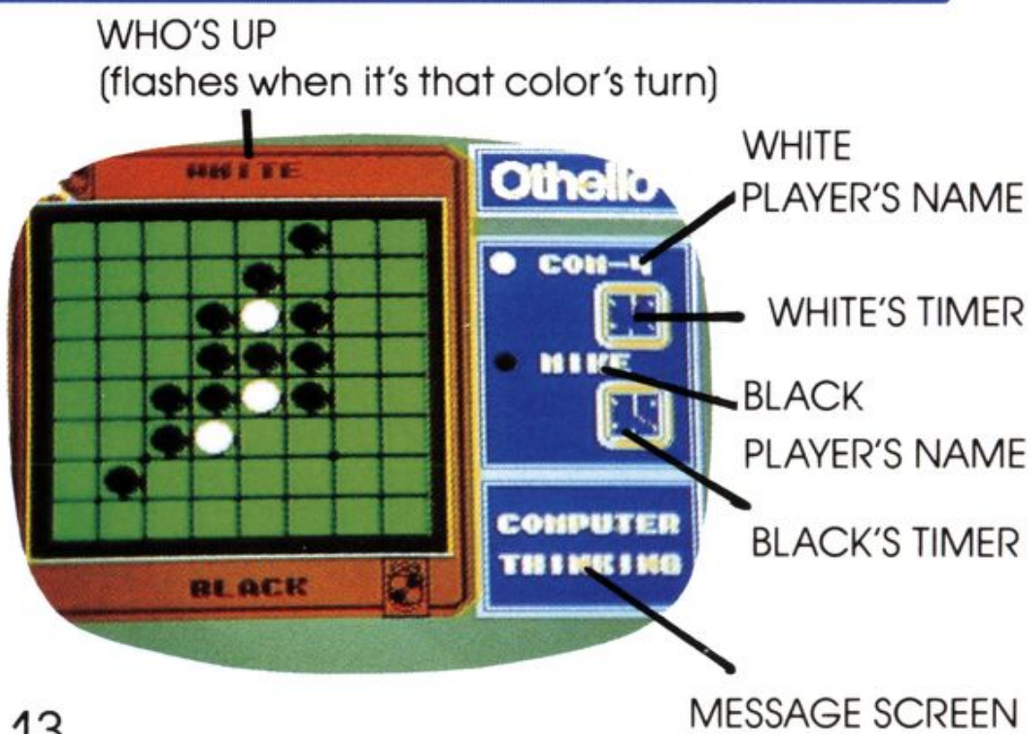
corner of the screen when all of your letters have been selected. Then press the A BUTTON to complete your entry.

If you make a *mistake* or want to change your letters, press the B BUTTON and that will erase the last letter you entered.

NOTE: In a 2-PLAYER game, BLACK will always enter his or her name or initials first—using controller #1. Followed by player #2 (WHITE)—using CONTROLLER #2. When you're finished entering names or initials, you'll continue on to the Othello playing board.

ON THE SCREEN

To help you keep track of turns, moves and times, there are several elements of the playing screen. They are as follows:



PLAYING OTHELLO

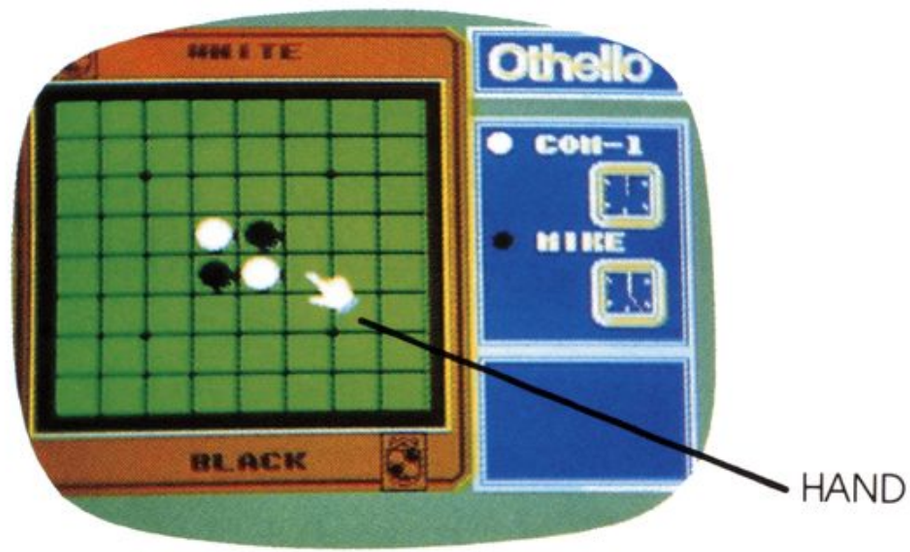
THE OBJECT

Whether you're playing against a friend or against the Othello computer, the object of the game is the same: to have more of your color discs (BLACK or WHITE) on the board at the end of the game than your opponent has of his color discs.

There are 64 squares on the Othello board. And 64 reversible discs—BLACK on one side, WHITE on the other. Throughout the course of the game, the discs will be flipped—from one side to the other—depending on the moves you make.

STARTING OUT

Othello always starts out with two black discs and two white discs placed like this in the center of the board:



From this set-up, each player takes turns placing a disc on the board. The player using the BLACK discs always goes first.

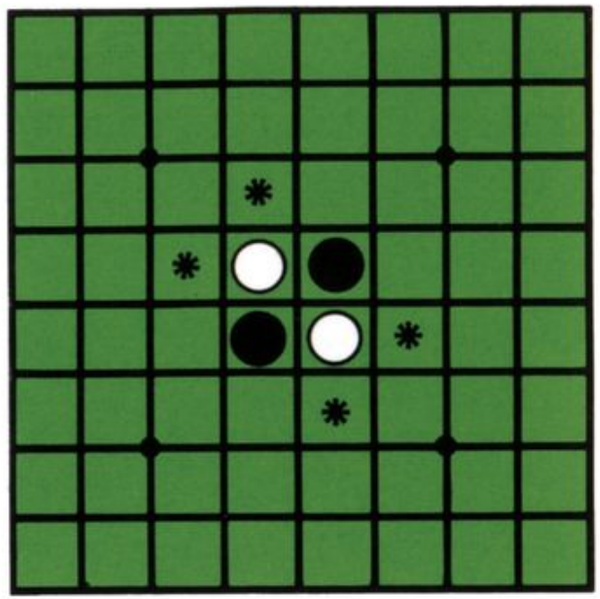
PLACING A DISC ON THE BOARD

To place a disc, use the CONTROLLER ARROWS to move the "HAND" around the board. When the hand is pointing to the square on which you wish to place a disc, press the A BUTTON and your disc will appear on that square.

TRAPPING YOUR OPPONENT

In each move (or disc placement), you must successfully "trap" your opponent's disc or discs. This means that your color discs must be at either end of a row of your opponents discs.

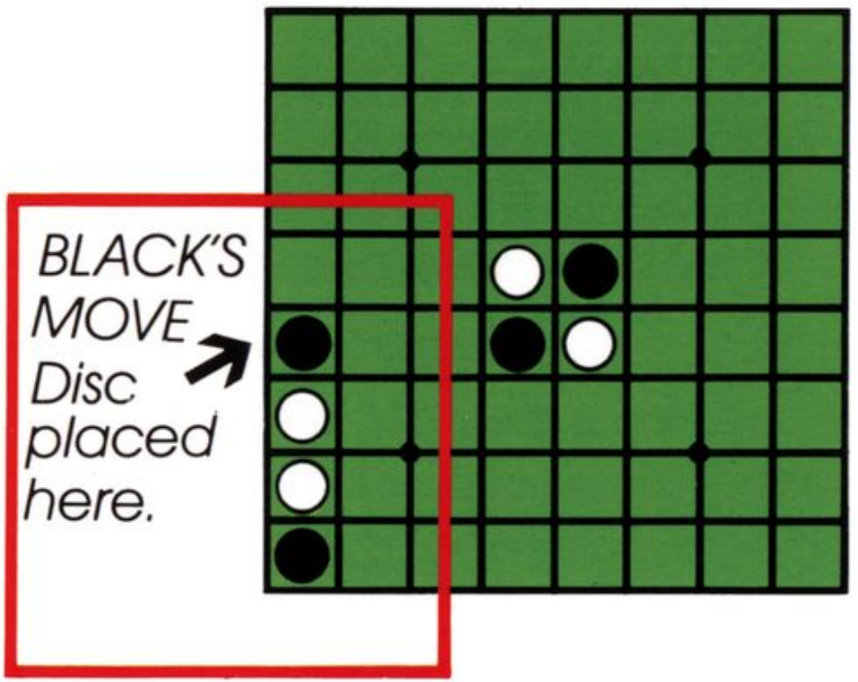
For example, in the first move, BLACK has these options for trapping WHITE.



MAKING A SUCCESSFUL MOVE

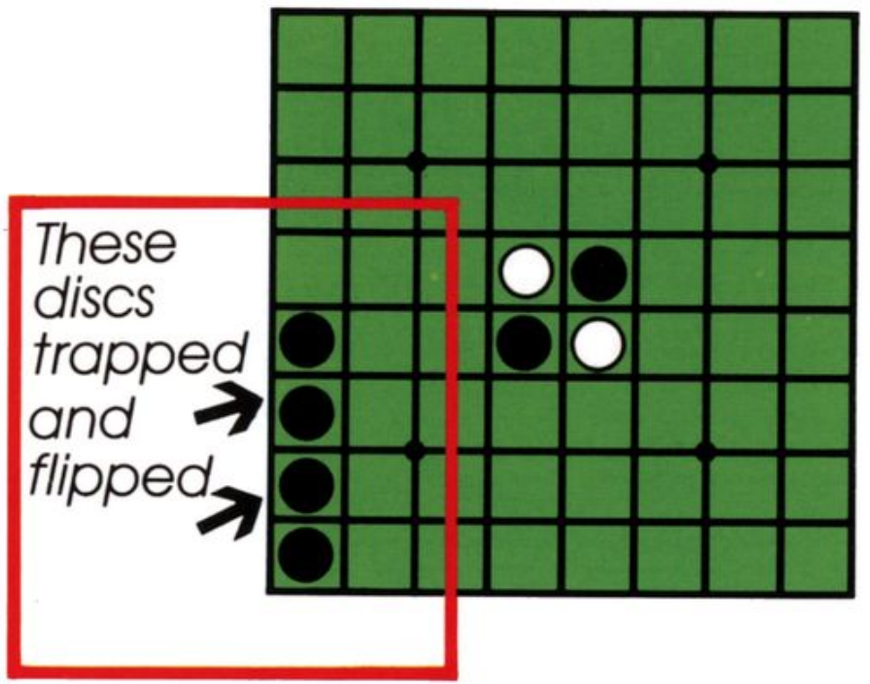
Your disc must be placed on a square that allows you to trap your opponent. This means that your disc is placed on the board so that a row or rows of your opponent's discs are "trapped" on both ends by your disc. If you do not place your disc correctly, the MESSAGE SCREEN will tell you to **"Try Again."**

When you "trap" your opponent's disc(s), they will then *flip* to your color. In examples A & B below,



Example A

BLACK flips the trapped discs and the row now looks like this:



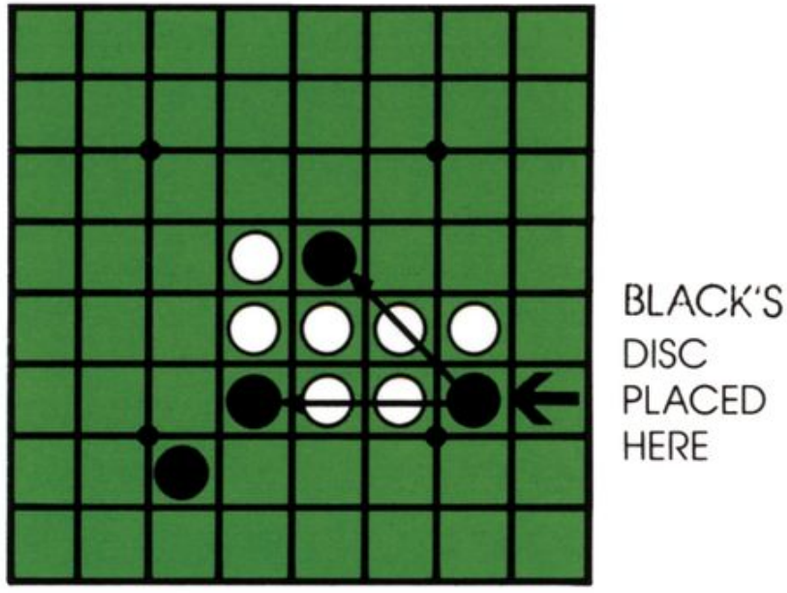
Example B

DETERMINING A ROW TO TRAP

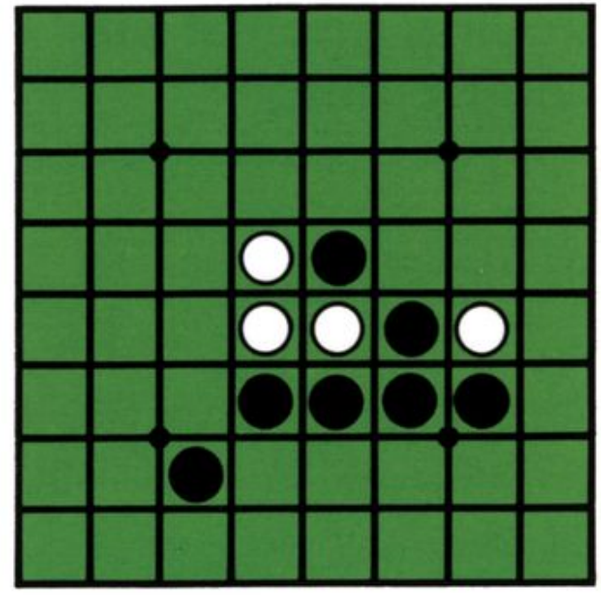
A row can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal, as long as it's a continuous straight line. And you can "trap" more than one row at a time.

Once you place your disc so that it traps a row or rows of your opponent's discs, all the "trapped" discs will flip from your opponent's

color to your color. In examples C and D below, BLACK has actually created two separate "traps" with one move.



Example C



Example D

TO CANCEL A MOVE

Once you've placed your disc on a square, you *may* have the option of changing your mind and removing it. (See ***Skill Levels and Time Limits,*** pages 8-10, to determine in which games you can use the CANCEL feature.)

Here's how it works:

- You make a move and place your disc on a square.
- Your opponent then makes their move.

- You then decide you want to cancel your last move AND the move your opponent just made.

When playing against the Othello computer:

- To cancel, when it is your turn again, press the B BUTTON. **"Cancel"** will appear in the MESSAGE BOX and the previous two moves will be canceled. It will then be your turn to place another disc.

When playing against a friend in a 2-PLAYER game:

- To *attempt* to cancel, when it is your turn press the B BUTTON. **"Cancel"** will appear in the MESSAGE BOX.
- The MESSAGE BOX will then display **"Accept?"** followed by **"Yes"** and **"No."**
- If your opponent chooses to accept your cancel request, he or she uses the CONTROLLER ARROWS to move the white arrow on the screen to **"Yes,"** and presses the A BUTTON. The previous two moves will be canceled and it will be your turn again.
- If your opponent chooses *not* to accept your cancel request, he or she will move the white arrow to **"No"** and press the A BUTTON. It will then be your turn again but the previous two moves will *not* be canceled.

PASSING ON A MOVE

The only time you can PASS is when there are absolutely no opportunities to trap your opponent. When this happens, a message on the screen will inform you that you must pass, and to press the A BUTTON. This will be your only option—although you can continue to study the board as long as you like.

IT'S NEVER OVER TILL IT'S OVER

Part of the appeal and mystery of Othello is that one move can literally change the whole complexion of the game. Especially near the end.

Here are the four ways this game can end:

- When the board is completely filled with discs.
- When neither opponent can make a valid move.
- When the board is all one color.
- When a player's time runs out.

In the first two endings , the player with the most of his or her color discs, wins, though a tie is possible. However, in the fourth ending the player who uses up all his time, loses, and his opponent wins—no matter what the disc count is on the screen.

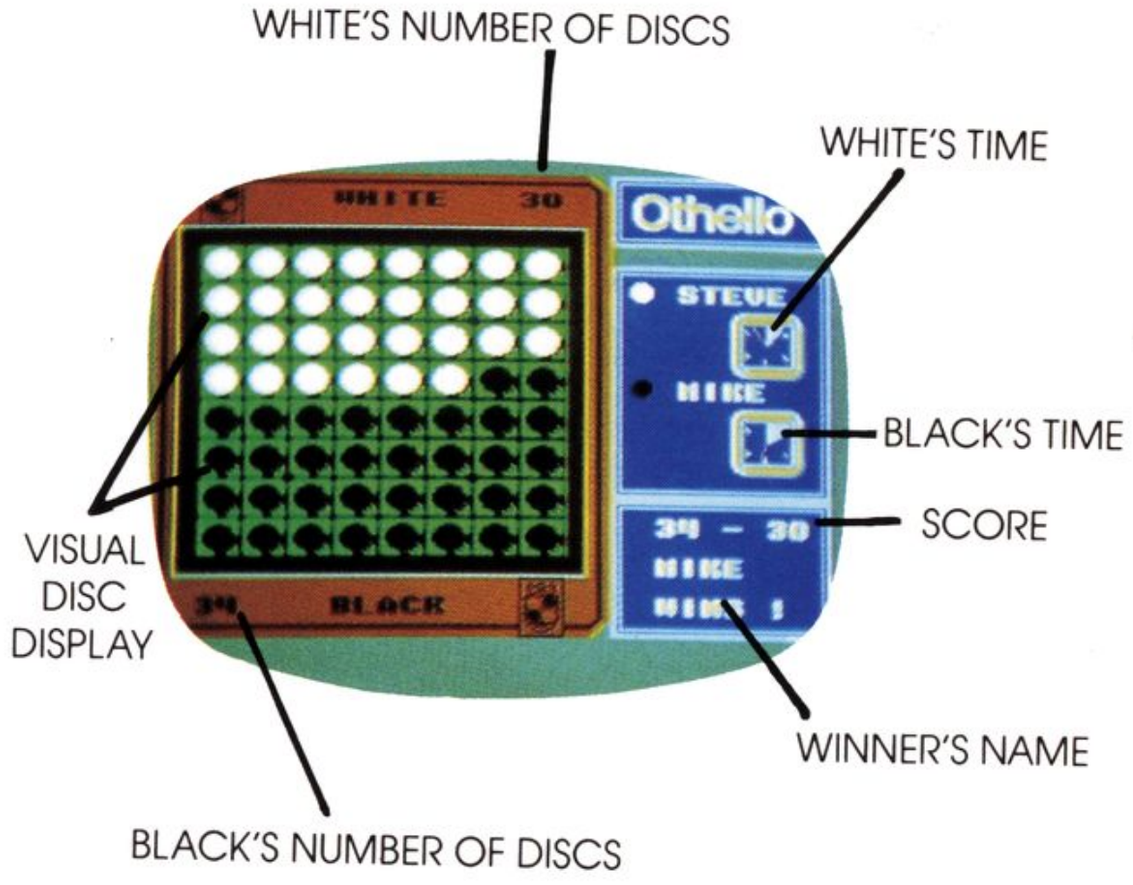
THE FINAL SCORE

Provided no one ran out of time, the game is over when every possible square has been played.

TO VIEW THE "WINNING SCORE SCREEN"—Press the START BUTTON at the end of the game. It will show you who won, how many discs each player had on the board at the end of the game, and the final score.

TO RETURN TO THE "TITLE SCREEN"—Press the START BUTTON.

TO PLAY AGAIN—select **"Play Again"** from the GAME SELECTION SCREEN.



DISC TIPS

- Think ahead. What appears to be a good move at the time, may simply set up your opponent for a series of even better moves.

- Moves that flip a large number of discs early on in the game are not necessarily your best strategy. In fact, such moves can often work against you in the middle and final stages of the game by giving your opponent too many opportunities to "trap" your discs.

- Look for double and even triple "trap" moves—especially in the later stages of the game. Also, watch that you don't set yourself up for such moves if you can help it.

- Go for the edges—especially the corners! This will make it much more difficult for your opponent to "trap" you. And it will increase your chances of keeping the surrounding area mainly in your color.

- The rows that are one in from the edges have often been referred to as "the danger zone." Be sure to use extreme caution and weigh your options when placing discs in this area.

- If you have one solid corner of the board covered with your color, you have a good chance of winning. However, if you can break up such a block, you have

a good chance of turning the odds in your favor.

- If you've never played this game before, watch a couple of demonstration games. It will give you a good idea of how—and why—certain moves are made.

A LIFETIME TO MASTER . . .

Now that you know the basics of Othello, it's time to practice. And learn from your mistakes. Each time you play, you'll discover new strategies and tactics. New moves and counter moves. And maybe one day, you can become an **Othello** master.

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This warranty shall not be applicable to the extent that any provision of this warranty is prohibited by any federal, state or municipal law which cannot be pre-empted.

COMPLIANCE WITH FCC REGULATIONS

This equipment generates and uses radio frequency energy and if not installed and used properly, that is, in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, may cause interference to radio and television reception. It has been type tested and found to comply with the limits for a Class B computing device in accordance with the specifications in Subpart J of Part 15 of FCC Rules, which are designed to provide reasonable protection against such interference in a residential installation. However, there is no guarantee that interference will not occur in a particular installation. If this equipment does cause interference to radio or television reception, which can be determined by turning the equipment off and on, the user is encouraged to try to correct the interference by one or more of the following measures:

- Reorient the receiving antenna
- Relocate the NES with respect to the receiver
- Move the NES away from the receiver
- Plug the NES Into a different outlet so that the computer and receiver are on different circuits.

If necessary, the user should consult an experienced radio/television technician for additional suggestions. The user may find the following booklet prepared by the Federal Communications Commission helpful. How to identify and Resolve Radio-TV Interference Problems. This booklet is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 Stock No. 004-000-00345-4

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